

Message Text

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PAGE 01 CANBER 03731 01 OF 02 150901Z
ACTION PM-05

INFO OCT-01 EA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00
SSO-00 ICAE-00 INRE-00 DOE-15 ACDA-12 INR-10 L-03
NASA-01 SOE-02 SS-15 OES-07 EB-08 PA-01 SP-02
OC-06 CCO-00 /098 W
-----103092 150954Z /10

O 150817Z MAY 78
FM AMEMBASSY CANBERRA
TO SECDEF ISA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
INFO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 3269
DCA IMMEDIATE
DCA PAC IMMEDIATE
COMNAVTELCOM IMMEDIATE
CNO IMMEDIATE
NAVCOMSTA HAROLD E. HOLT IMMEDIATE
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 1 OF 2 CANBERRA 3731

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

EO 11652: GDS
TAGS: MARR PEPR AS
SUBJECT: GOA APPROACH TO OSD/ISA ABOUT NORTH WEST CAPE GROUND
SATELLITE TERMINAL

REF: (A) CANBERRA 3730 (DTG 150816Z MAY 78)
(B) CANBERRA 3694 (DTG 130248Z MAY 78)

1. DURING PREPARATION OF REF (A), DEFENSE ATTACHE OBTAINED
COPY OF INTERNAL A/DOD MESSAGE DESTINED FOR HEAD OF AUSTRALIAN
DEFENSE STAFF IN WASHINGTON, INSTRUCTING HIM TO GO INTO SECDEF/
ISA AT HIGHEST PRACTICAL LEVEL (ASSTSEC ABRAMOWITZ WAS
SPECIFICALLY NAMED) TO SEEK ADVICE CONCERNING THE "LACK OF
POLITICAL CONSULTATION" ON THE QUESTION OF THE PROPOSED
SATELLITE GROUND STATION FOR NORTH WEST CAPE (REF B.)
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PAGE 02 CANBER 03731 01 OF 02 150901Z

2. GIST OF AUSTRALIAN CONCERN, WHICH WAS FORMULATED BY
FIRST ASSISTANT SECRETARY FOR STRATEGIC AND INTERNATIONAL
POLICY BOB HAMILTON (WHO CAN BE A BIT PUNCTILIOUS
WHEN HE BELIEVES PRINCIPLES ARE AT ISSUE...) IS:
A) THE GOA HAS HAD NO ADVICE FROM "POLITICALLY
AUTHORITATIVE QUARTERS IN THE USDOD ON THE BASIS OF

WHICH THE MINISTER OF DEFENSE COULD DEFEND THE GOVERNMENT "AGAINST CHARGES OF NON-CONSULTATION";

B) "THE US AUTHORITIES HAVE SO FAR FAILED TO BRING THESE MATTERS OFFICIALLY TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT -- NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THEY HAVE PUBLICLY ENVISAGED THAT AUSTRALIA IS TO BECOME HOST TO THE TERMINAL";

C) THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT, IN THE WORDS OF AUSTRALIAN DEFENSE MINISTER KILLEN THIS MORNING, BEEN "TREATED WITH PROPER COURTESY IN THIS MATTER."

NOTE: ADOD BELIEVES THAT IN THE CONTEXT OF PARAGRAPH 9(2) OF THE "LAND USE AGREEMENT" OF SEPTEMBER 1967, THE US SHOULD HAVE OFFICIALLY INFORMED ADOD ABOUT ITS PLANS FOR THE UPDATED GROUND SATELLITE STATION.

3. BEGIN TEXT OF SUBSTANTIVE PORTION OF ADOD

MESSAGE TO HADS:

"IT IS NOT REPEAT NOT SUFFICIENT FOR US TO RECEIVE TECHNICAL INFORMATION FROM YOUR SO(C). WHAT HAS BEEN REQUIRED TO ALLOW THIS MATTER TO BE HANDLED PUBLICLY HAS BEEN ADVICE FROM POLITICALLY AUTHORITATIVE QUARTERS IN THE US DEPARTMENT OF DEFENSE ON THE BASIS OF WHICH THE MINISTER COULD, WITH THE LEAST POSSIBLE EMBARRASSMENT TO ALL CONCERNED:

"(A) IDENTIFY THE ROLE AND FUNCTION PRESENTLY INTENDED BY THE US FOR THE PLANNED REPLACEMENT TERMINAL IN THE SHORT AND LONGER TERM;
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PAGE 03 CANBER 03731 01 OF 02 150901Z

"(B) COMMENT ON THE COMPATIBILITY OF (A) ABOVE WITH THE EXISTING ROLE AND FUNCTION OF THE PRESENT TERMINAL;

"(C) MAKE A CONFIDENT, ALBEIT INTERIM, JUDGEMENT CONCERNING THE POLICY IMPLICATIONS FOR AUSTRALIA OF ESTABLISHMENT OF THE TERMINAL IN AUSTRALIA;

"(D) EXPLAIN THE EXTENT TO WHICH US PLANS FOR ITS ESTABLISHMENT IN AUSTRALIA ARE HELD BY THE US TO BE PROVISIONAL OR FIRM AND FINAL;

"(E) EXPLAIN WHY THE US AUTHORITIES HAVE SO FAR FAILED TO BRING THESE MATTERS OFFICIALLY TO THE ATTENTION OF THE AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT - NOTWITHSTANDING THAT THEY HAVE PUBLICLY ENVISAGED THAT THAT GOVERNMENT IS TO BECOME HOST TO THE TERMINAL;

"(F) EXPLAIN WHETHER, (WITHOUT PREJUDICE TO ANY LATER AND DEFINITIVE DECISION) THE GOVERNMENT SEES REASON TO OBJECT AT THIS STAGE TO THE CONTINUANCE OF ANY US PROVISIONAL PLANNING.

"(IV) IN OUR CABLES WE HAVE EMPHASIZED THE NEED FOR YOU TO TALK WITH ISA - WE HAVE IN MIND SPECIFICALLY ABRAMEWITZ WHO COMMANDS THE NECESSARY POLITICAL AUTHORITY. WHY THIS HAS NOT BEEN DONE AND REPORTED IS NOT UNDERSTOOD. PLEASE DO IT WITHOUT FURTHER DELAY.

"(V) YOU SHOULD TAKE ISA THROUGH AND OBTAIN THEIR
OFFICIAL ADVICE ON THE POINTS IDENTIFIED IN PARA (III)
ABOVE. YOU SHOULD MAKE CLEAR THAT THE NEED MAY ARISE
HERE FOR THE MINISTER TO QUOTE THAT ADVICE. YOU MAY
ALSO CONFIRM TO THEM THAT THE MINISTER HAS STATED IN
RESPONSE TO A QUESTION ON ABC THIS MORNING THAT THE
AUSTRALIAN GOVERNMENT HAS NOT BEEN TREATED IN THIS
MATTER 'WITH PROPER COURTESY'. (SEE OUR SEPARATE
TELEGRAM.)
"YOU SHOULD REQUEST TO BE FURNISHED IMMEDIATELY FOR
TRANSMISSION TO CANBERRA OF ALL PUBLIC STATEMENTS MADE
BY US AUTHORITIES CONCERNING THE INSTALLATION OF THE
EQUIPMENT IN AUSTRALIA."

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PAGE 04 CANBER 03731 01 OF 02 150901Z

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PAGE 01 CANBER 03731 02 OF 02 150904Z
ACTION PM-05

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NASA-01 SOE-02 SS-15 OES-07 EB-08 PA-01 SP-02
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 2 OF 2 CANBERRA 3731

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

4. FYI -- EMBASSY'S INTERIM RESPONSE, AS INDICATED REF (A), HAS BEEN TO STATE CATEGORICALLY THAT (A) GOA, AT TECHNICAL LEVELS, HAS BEEN FULLY AWARE OF PLANS FOR MODERNIZATION AND SUBSTITUTION OF ADVANCED EQUIPMENT FOR OBSOLESCEMENT EQUIPMENT ALL ALONG; (B) THE SUBSTITUTION OF ADVANCED EQUIPMENT PERFORMING THE SAME FUNCTION AS OBSOLESCEMENT EQUIPMENT HAS NOT BEEN CONSIDERED TO BE A MATTER REQUIRING FORMAL CONSULTATION AT THE GOVERNMENT-TO-GOVERNMENT LEVEL, ANY MORE THAN THE SUBSTITUTION OF ELECTRIC TYPEWRITERS FOR MANUAL ONES, OR A NEW ALUMINUM STEPLADDER FOR A BROKEN WOODEN ONE, REQUIRES "POLITICAL CONSULTATION AT AUTHORITATIVE POLICY LEVELS"; AND (C) AS A PRACTICAL MATTER, IT WOULD BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CLEAR -- AT A POLICY LEVEL -- EVERY USDOD REFERENCE TO BUDGETING AND PLANNING FOR CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 CANBER 03731 02 OF 02 150904Z

EQUIPMENT THAT MIGHT BE DESTINED FOR ONE OF OUR JOINT FACILITIES IN AUSTRALIA. THE RANGE OF PLANNING AND BUDGETING ACTIVITIES OF THIS NATURE ARE ALMOST INFINITE. WE HAVE POINTED OUT THAT IT IS PRECISELY TO ALLAY THE SORT OF PROBLEMS THAT HAVE UNEXPECTEDLY SHOT UP TO THE MINISTERIAL LEVEL IN THIS CASE THAT A DECISION HAS MADE TO PLACE AN AUSTRALIAN NAVY OFFICER IN THE POSITION OF DEPUTY COMMANDER OF HAROLD E. HOLT.

5. FYI -- I GATHER THAT THE PRINCIPAL IMPETUS FOR THIS BUSH-LEAGUE TEMPEST IS KILLEN'S PERSONAL EMBARRASSMENT; WE DO NOT BELIEVE IT PORTENDS ANYTHING MORE SERIOUS THAN A MINOR NUISANCE, SO TRANSPARENT IS THE PARLIAMENTARY TRAP KILLEN FELL INTO -- ANSWERING OPPOSITION QUESTIONS ON A HIGHLY FANCIFUL PRESS REPORT BY A NOTORIOUSLY PROVOCATIVE REPORTER. EMBASSY WOULD BE GRATEFUL FOR ANY GUIDANCE WASHINGTON MAY CARE TO OFFER US ABOUT THE EXPLANATION WE SHOULD BE GIVING, AND WE WOULD FURTHER BE INTERESTED IN KNOWING THE RESULTS OF THE AUSTRALIAN APPROACHES TO OSD/ISA.
ALSTON

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Message Attributes

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